

N.A. Meiramova^{*}, A.O. Tursynbaeva

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan
(E-mail: nmeyramova@mail.ru, aigul_73@mail.ru)

Continuity of health of soul and body: in the context of philosophical views and medical paradigms

In the era of globalization, socio-cultural transformations and the expansion of the information space have profoundly influenced the content and methodology of health research. In contemporary science, the concept of health is no longer confined to biological parameters but is interpreted as a biopsychosocial phenomenon that necessitates a comprehensive examination of the interrelation among the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of human existence. Within this framework, understanding mental well-being as a fundamental prerequisite for physical health has become a pivotal direction in interdisciplinary studies of human integrity. This article provides a comprehensive philosophical and medical analysis of the interconnection between mind and body. Drawing on the works of thinkers and scholars from antiquity to the present day, it elucidates the significance of psychosomatic unity in shaping human existence. From a medical-paradigmatic perspective, the reciprocal influence of body and soul is examined, revealing their harmony as a continuation of the holistic worldview within modern scientific thought. The relevance of the study is determined by the increasing importance of reinterpreting the unity of mind and body under conditions of spiritual crisis, psycho-emotional instability, and transformation of life values in contemporary society. The research integrates philosophical-anthropological and medical perspectives, highlighting the harmony of mind and body as a key determinant of human well-being and quality of life. The findings substantiate that physical health is inextricably linked to mental well-being, and that their interdependence constitutes the essential foundation of both physical stability and spiritual resilience.

Keywords: soul, body, health, philosophy, medicine, integrity, medical paradigm, biopsychosocial phenomenon, substance.

Introduction

The human being is a complex living entity viewed as an integral system of soul and body. The inner spiritual world and the external biological existence of a person are always inextricably connected. These two dimensions have long been central objects of study in philosophical, religious, and medical traditions. The soul represents the totality of human thought, emotion, will, conscience, and spiritual essence, while the body embodies the material and biological dimension of human existence. The interaction between soul and body constitutes one of the fundamental factors determining the quality of human life, as well as its spiritual and physical well-being.

At the modern stage of philosophical thought concerning the harmony between soul and body, the soul's health is no longer fully recognized as the foundation of physical health, unlike in earlier epochs. In this context, the historical preconditions of globalization and the dynamics of socio-cultural transformation bring forth the necessity of a comprehensive study of the interdependence between mental and physical well-being. The issue of harmony between the soul and the body remains one of the most pressing and significant topics throughout human history. The historical significance of this interrelation manifests itself in humanity's pursuit of self-awareness, understanding of life's meaning, exploration of the ontological essence of existence, and definition of one's social role. The study of the correlation between spiritual and physical health retains its scientific relevance across different historical periods, reflecting the dominant worldviews, political structures, and socio-cultural conditions of each era.

Methods and materials

This research employs the dialectical method, which explains the interrelation between the soul and the body through the unity and struggle of opposites and the laws of development. The hermeneutic method is used to interpret ancient and medieval philosophical texts and religious doctrines concerning the concepts of soul and body. The phenomenological method enables an exploration of human subjective experience, ana-

^{*} Corresponding author's e-mail: nmeyramova@mail.ru

lyzing the influence of various mental and emotional states on physical health as manifestations of consciousness.

Furthermore, the historical-philosophical method is applied to trace the evolution of philosophical ideas regarding the interrelation of soul and body across different epochs, schools, and intellectual traditions. The axiological method is employed to evaluate the harmony of soul and body as a spiritual and cultural value of human civilization, revealing its significance for understanding the essence of human existence.

Together, these methods provide a comprehensive framework for examining the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of the unity between the soul and the body within both philosophical and medical paradigms.

Discussion

The analysis conducted in the course of this research clearly demonstrates that the unity of soul and body constitutes a fundamental problem of human existence. Since antiquity, philosophy and medicine have regarded the correlation between the human soul and body as a central subject of inquiry. In the context of contemporary globalization, the philosophical and medical interpretations of their unity reveal a number of contradictions.

Ancient Eastern philosophy conceived the unity of soul and body as an inseparable whole.

In the Indian philosophical tradition, the notions of soul and body are viewed as two different yet intimately interconnected aspects of human existence. Their interpretation varies according to the metaphysical premises of each philosophical school. In some schools, the soul and body are expressed as a single integral entity, whereas in others they are considered ontologically independent. According to the Upanishads, Brahma Sutra, Bhagavad Gita, and Shankara's commentaries, the Vedanta philosophy perceives the relationship between soul and body as an ontologically indivisible unity. The central principle here is Advaita—non-duality. There is no essential distinction between the individual soul and the cosmic spirit: Atman is identical with Brahman. "The body is a transient form, while the spirit is the eternal essence" [1; 71–87]. Scientifically, this viewpoint corresponds to a monistic ontology, where body and soul represent two manifestations of a single being. The body is a temporary phenomenal shell, whereas the spirit constitutes its transcendent foundation. According to Samkhya-Karika and Yoga Sutra, the Samkhya and Yoga schools, in contrast to Vedanta, adhere to a dualistic ontology. Here, existence is composed of two eternal substances: Purusha—the spiritual, conscious principle, and Prakriti—material nature. They are independent, yet interact in empirical reality. "Purusha is the observer, Prakriti the observed. The body is the instrument, and the spirit is the witness" [2; 21–27]. From a scientific standpoint, this view corresponds to substantial dualism, where body and soul differ in nature but condition each other in practical experience. The Yoga system aims to achieve balance between these two principles through disciplined practice. In Tripitaka, Dhammapada, and Madhyamaka-Karika, Buddhist philosophy rejects the notion of atman altogether. In the Buddha's teaching, there is no permanent, unchanging soul; a human being is a combination of five aggregates—body, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness. "Where there is no soul, there is no permanence; where there is no permanence, there is suffering" [3; 158]. From a scholarly standpoint, this corresponds to processual monism, where a person is regarded as a stream of interdependent psycho-physiological processes. The individual "soul" or "body" does not exist as an independent essence but as mutually conditioned flows of phenomena. According to Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, Ayurveda, as a medico-philosophical system, characterizes the relation between soul and body as a biopsychofunctional integrity. The human being is described as a three-tiered structure: physical, psychic, and spiritual. These three layers form one living system. Disease arises from imbalance at one level and affects the others. "Bodily balance is possible only through the equilibrium of mind and spirit" [4; 25–40]. Scientifically, this represents integrative holism, perceiving the human organism as a unified system of biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. In Tattvartha Sutra and Sutrakritanga, Jainism asserts that soul and matter are two distinct, eternal substances whose interaction occurs through karmic action. The body is the "garment" of the soul—temporary, while the soul is eternal. "Soul and body are two natures. Yet the soul cannot act without the body, and the body cannot live without the soul" [5; 248]. Scientifically, this corresponds to ethical dualism, in which the body serves as the field of the spirit's moral experience, and the spirit as the ethical subject. The relationship between soul and body is regulated through moral purification and physical discipline.

Chinese philosophy interprets the integrity of soul and body through the categories of natural harmony, balance, and vital energy. Within the Chinese worldview, a human being is part of the cosmos, and his bodily and spiritual states are connected with the rhythm of nature. Health, therefore, is not merely a biological or

physical condition but a state of spiritual-energetic harmony. In Confucian philosophy, the physical and spiritual health of the individual is closely tied to moral order and social harmony. For Confucius, human existence embodies ethical and spiritual balance. The equilibrium of the soul determines the order of the body: “He who rectifies himself rectifies both his body and society” [6; 15–27]. Philosophically, Confucianism rests on ethical holism, where moral cultivation and bodily discipline represent two sides of inner harmony. The Confucian model justifies the interdependence of soul and body within the socio-ethical context, linking moral disposition and physical health—a foundation for modern psychosomatic theories. Laozi’s Daoist philosophy interprets human spiritual and bodily existence within the universal principle of Dao—the source of being and life energy. Human health depends on living according to the Dao, harmonizing the inner and outer flows of energy. “Order the body and calm the soul, and the Dao will reveal itself” [7; 256]. Zhuangzi conceived the human being as a fragment of the universe in constant transformation. Spiritual balance and physical well-being arise from the harmony of yin and yang: “The body and spirit of man breathe in one rhythm; when this breath is broken, life ceases” [8; 412]. Daoism thus embodies ontological monism and bioenergetic holism, interpreting soul and body as variable states of qi energy. Health is defined by the equilibrium of yin and yang forces. Daoist teachings later shaped spiritual-physical disciplines such as qigong, taiji, and daoyin, which unite physical exercises and breathing with spiritual purification. Hence, Chinese medicine considers health from both philosophical and medical paradigms: the human organism is a microcosm, the cosmos a macrocosm; disease arises when harmony between them is disrupted. “When the soul is calm, qi is regulated; when qi is regulated, blood flows freely; when blood flows freely, the body is healthy” [9; 528]. In this synthesis of medicine and philosophy, the interrelation of spirit, vital energy, and essential substance explains the mutual influence of soul and body. Each organ corresponds to a spiritual state: the heart governs consciousness, the liver willpower, the lungs serenity. This system constitutes the historical-philosophical foundation of the biopsychosocial model.

In ancient Greek philosophy, the problem of the soul–body relation emerged as one of the key categories of human existence and acquired a deep theoretical foundation at the intersection of philosophy and medicine. Thinkers sought to explain the interconnection of the spiritual and material principles of human nature, the interaction between soul and body, and the meaning of life itself. Plato’s perspective, marked by dualism, laid the groundwork for metaphysical systems addressing the relationship between spirit and matter. He regarded the soul as an eternal and immutable substance, while the body is temporal and perishable. For Plato, the soul originates from the world of Ideas, while the body constitutes the material limitation preventing its ascent to truth. “The body is the prison of the soul, and death is its liberation” [10; 180]. The soul pre-exists the body and survives its demise, serving as the bearer of the divine principle. Cognition, according to Plato, is the act of recollection, restoring the soul’s link to the eternal world. His dualism called for spiritual ascent through liberation from corporeal desires. This conception later influenced Neoplatonism and Christian anthropology. Aristotle, conversely, developed a systematic scientific conception of the unity of soul and body. The soul, he argued, is the form of a living body, while the body is its matter—thus, the soul is not an externally infused substance but the internal actuality of life. He viewed the soul as the source and final cause of vitality: “The soul gives life to the body, and the body provides the field for the soul’s operation” [11; 45]. Aristotle classified the soul into three levels: nutritive (vegetative), sensitive (animal), and rational (human). The rational soul defines the highest aspect of human nature. His hylomorphism presented soul and body as mutually dependent, hierarchically united, enabling a holistic approach to human biological, psychological, and ethical dimensions. Alcmaeon of Croton was among the first to interpret the relationship of soul and body physiologically. He proposed that sensory and cognitive functions are rooted in the brain, recognizing the central role of the nervous system [12; 83]. For him, the harmony (isonomia) between bodily elements ensures both health and spiritual equilibrium. Disharmony leads to disease. Thus, Alcmaeon anticipated the scientific understanding of psychosomatic interdependence. Hippocrates viewed the human being as an integral organism governed by natural harmony. His theory of four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, black bile) explained disease as a disturbance of equilibrium. Bodily health and mental serenity are closely connected; physical illness results from emotional imbalance, and psychological states influence physiology. For Hippocrates, medicine was not merely treatment of the body but restoration of harmony within the person. His approach embodies the ethical and philosophical depth that underlies the modern biopsychosocial paradigm. Comparatively, ancient thought reveals three dominant approaches: Platonic dualism, which privileges spirit over matter; Aristotelian hylomorphism, which unites soul and body as natural form and matter; and Hippocratic–Alcmaeonian naturalism, which emphasizes their physiological and psychological interdependence.

In the medieval period, the synthesis of religious and philosophical doctrines raised the problem of soul and body to a new level. It was no longer confined to individual experience but served as a key to understanding humanity's relation to God and eternal destiny. Augustine of Hippo, within Christian theocentrism, regarded the soul as an eternal substance directly linked to God. The body, by contrast, is its temporary dwelling; true life acquires meaning only through union with God. The hierarchy between soul and body reflects divine order—the soul superior, the body subordinate. Thomas Aquinas, however, reconciling Aristotle's form and matter with Christian theology, conceived the soul as the form of the body—its animating principle. Man, he asserted, is not a composite of two substances but a unified being [13; 75]. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) deepened this synthesis by grounding the interdependence of soul and body in physiological and psychological reasoning. The soul is a distinct substance, yet its function and vitality depend on the body's health: "Bodily health enhances the power of the soul, and the tranquility of the soul ensures the health of the body" [14; 45–50]. Al-Farabi similarly saw human integrity as a unity of spiritual and bodily being. The soul, for him, is the source of cognition and moral activity, while the body serves as its instrument. Spiritual perfection, therefore, presupposes bodily health [15; 103]. Comparatively, Augustine and Aquinas, within Christian thought, emphasized the divine nature of the soul, while Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi sought to rationalize the natural harmony of soul and body. Augustine viewed the body as an obstacle; Ibn Sina as a necessary medium of the soul's activity.

During the Renaissance, the human being was conceived as the center of the universe (anthropocentrism), integrating spiritual and bodily dimensions. Thinkers such as Leonardo da Vinci and Nicholas of Cusa explored the human organism through both art and science. Leonardo's anatomical studies revealed the harmony of structure, expressing the unity of bodily beauty and spiritual perfection. Humanists maintained that spiritual growth occurs through both soul and body; intellect, will, and aesthetic sense are inseparable from corporeal being. Art and science became instruments for exploring the inner world and values of man. Thus, the Renaissance affirmed the interdependence of soul and body as essential to human wholeness [16; 312].

In modern and contemporary philosophy, the issue underwent radical transformation. Under the influence of rationalism and empiricism, philosophical anthropology shifted from metaphysical unity to epistemological duality. Rene Descartes' doctrine of dualism separated the thinking substance (*res cogitans*) from the extended substance (*res extensa*). The soul, as the seat of consciousness, and the body, as material extension, interact yet exist independently. This dualism affirmed spiritual autonomy and elevated the mental above the physical [17; 35–45]. Thomas Hobbes, in contrast, denied such separation, interpreting all mental phenomena as mechanical movements of matter. Thought, sensation, and emotion are, for him, functions of the body [18; 45–55]. This materialism laid the foundation for physiology and psychology, though it reduced human spirituality to biological mechanism. John Locke, occupying an intermediate position, acknowledged the empirical interaction of soul and body. The mind, a *tabula rasa*, acquires knowledge through sensory experience mediated by the body, yet maintains cognitive independence [19; 50–60]. Immanuel Kant reinterpreted the issue epistemologically, assigning the body to the world of phenomena (empirical experience) and the soul to the noumenal realm (pure reason). The boundary between them is the limit of cognition: the body is known through experience, the soul only through transcendental reflection [20; 333–364]. Arthur Schopenhauer approached the problem dialectically: the body is the outward expression of the will, while the soul is its inner essence. Yet the two remain in constant conflict—the desires of the body disturb the serenity of the soul, and the soul's striving suppresses the body's impulses [21; 124–135]. His philosophy thus dramatizes the tragic tension between spirit and matter. In comparative perspective, Descartes and Kant sought to preserve the autonomy of the spiritual principle; Hobbes reduced it to physical causality; Locke mediated between them through experience; and Schopenhauer revealed their existential struggle. The Renaissance and Modern paradigms, grounded in anthropocentrism and rationalism, redefined medicine within a mechanistic framework. Disease was viewed as biological dysfunction, and healing as mechanical correction. Consequently, the modern era expanded scientific understanding of the human being while weakening the sense of spiritual unity. The harmony of soul and body became the locus of contradiction between rationalism and materialism, between mechanistic science and holistic anthropology.

Conclusion

The study has examined the philosophical and medical conceptions of the relationship between the soul and the body across different historical epochs. In antiquity, the unity of soul and body was regarded as an integral whole, where the physical and spiritual dimensions of human existence were perceived as mutually

interdependent. Medieval thinkers emphasized the primacy of the soul's spiritual nature, viewing the body merely as an instrument subordinate to the soul's divine activity. In early modern philosophy, the emergence of dualism led to a conceptual separation between mind and body, thereby obscuring their intrinsic interrelation.

Contemporary philosophical and scientific discourse, however, reinterprets this interconnection through a biopsychosocial paradigm, recognizing the holistic unity of human nature. The findings of the present study demonstrate that bodily health constitutes the foundation for mental and spiritual well-being, while psychological and spiritual harmony, in turn, ensures the optimal functioning of the body. The harmony between the two dimensions of human existence—physical and spiritual—represents the essential condition for the integrity of the individual and the quality of life.

Therefore, the preservation of both mental and physical health requires a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach, integrating medical, psychological, and social support systems. Such an approach enhances overall well-being, strengthens adaptive capacities, and contributes to a long, fulfilling, and balanced human life.

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Н.А. Мейрамова, А.О. Турсынбаева

Жан мен тән саулығының сабақтастығы: философиялық көзқарастар мен медициналық парадигмалар аясында

Жаһандану дәуіріндегі әлеуметтік-мәдени өзгерістер мен ақпараттық кеңістіктің ұлғаюы адам денсаулығын зерттеудің мазмұны мен әдістемесіне түбегейлі ықпал етуде. Қазіргі ғылымда денсаулық ұғымы биологиялық көрсеткіштермен ғана шектелмей, биопсихоәлеуметтік феномен ретінде қарастырылып, адамның физикалық, психикалық және әлеуметтік болмысының өзара байланысын кешенді талдауды қажет етеді. Осы тұрғыда жан саулығын тән саулығының іргелі алғышарты ретінде қарастыру адамның тұтас болмысын пән аралық деңгейде зерделеудің маңызды бағытына айналуға. Мақалада жан мен тәннің өзара байланысы философиялық және медициналық тұрғыдан кешенді түрде талданған. Ежелгі дәуірден қазіргі кезеңге дейінгі ойшылдар мен ғалымдардың еңбектеріне сүйене отырып, жан мен тән тұтастығының адам болмысындағы рөлі мен маңызы айқындалған. Медициналық парадигма тұрғысынан жан мен тәннің өзара ықпалы сараланып, олардың үйлесімділігі қазіргі ғылыми дүниетанымдағы тұтастық идеясының жалғасы ретінде қарастырылған. Зерттеудің өзектілігі қазіргі қоғамдағы рухани күйзеліс, психоэмоционалдық тұрақсыздық және өмірлік құндылықтардың трансформациясы жағдайында адамның жан және тән саулығын біртұтас жүйе ретінде түсінудің маңыздылығымен сипатталған. Бұл бағыттағы ізденістер денсаулықтың философиялық-антропологиялық және медициналық қырларын ұштастыра отырып, жан мен тәннің үйлесімділігін өмір сапасының негізгі детерминанты ретінде айқындауға бағытталған. Мақаланың нәтижесінде тән саулығының жан саулығымен тығыз байланыста екендігі, олардың өзара ықпалы адамның физикалық және рухани тұрақтылығының басты шарты болып табылатыны ғылыми тұрғыда негізделген.

Кілт сөздер: жан, тән, денсаулық, философия, медицина, тұтастық, медициналық парадигма, биопсихоәлеуметтік феномен, субстанция.

Н.А. Мейрамова, А.О. Турсынбаева

Преимственность здоровья души и тела: в контексте философских взглядов и медицинских парадигм

Социально-культурные трансформации и расширение информационного пространства в эпоху глобализации оказывают глубокое влияние на содержание и методологию исследования человеческого здоровья. В современной науке понятие здоровья не ограничивается лишь биологическими параметрами, но рассматривается как биопсихосоциальный феномен, предполагающий комплексный анализ взаимосвязи физического, психического и социального аспектов человеческого бытия. В данном контексте осмысление душевного здоровья как фундаментального основания телесного здоровья становится важным направлением междисциплинарных исследований целостной природы человека. В статье всесторонне анализируется взаимосвязь души и тела с философской и медицинской точек зрения. Опираясь на труды мыслителей и ученых от античности до современности, раскрывается роль и значение целостности души и тела в структуре человеческого существования. С позиции современной медицинской парадигмы рассматривается взаимное влияние духовного и физического начал, а также их гармония как проявление идеи целостности в научном мировоззрении. Актуальность исследования определяется необходимостью целостного понимания здоровья человека в условиях духовного кризиса, психоэмоциональной нестабильности и трансформации жизненных ценностей современного общества. Проведенный анализ направлен на интеграцию философско-антропологических и медицинских подходов к проблеме здоровья, выявление гармонии души и тела как ключевого детерминанта качества жизни. В результате обосновано, что физическое здоровье неразрывно связано с душевным состоянием, а их взаимное влияние выступает основным условием физической и духовной устойчивости человека.

Ключевые слова: душа, тело, здоровье, философия, медицина, целостность, медицинская парадигма, биопсихосоциальный феномен, субстанция.

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Information about the authors

Meiramova Nurgul — PhD student, Department of Philosophy, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7148-0756>

Tursynbaeva Aigul — Candidate of Philosophy, Professor of the Department of Philosophy, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1900-2685>